

# The Cairo Bulletin.

BY JOHN H. OBERLY & CO.

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## The Bulletin.

WEDNESDAY.

TRESSILIAN COURT;

OR,

The Baronet's Son.

BY MRS. HARRIET LEWIS.

CHAPTER I.

A FATEFUL CATASTROPHE.

A wild storm was raging upon the Mediterranean Sea, near the close of dreary November day, and sky and water were black with the doom of the sudden and furious tempest, before which a small sailing vessel was scudding under bare poles. Her hull amid rigging proclaimed her nationality. She was the *Gull*, Capt. Varino master, on her way from Cagliari to Palermo.

She had on board two seamen, and two passengers.

These passengers were Englishmen, who had procured passage on the *Gull* to Palermo, whence they intended to embark by steamer to Marseilles, the following day.

While the Captain and his assistants were attending to their duties, and expressing apprehensions as to their safety, the two Englishmen stood apart, leaning against the low bulwarks, and surveying the wild scene around them.

These men were both young, apparently of the same age, about three and twenty, but evidently they were not of the same station in life.

One, the more striking of the two, was aristocratic in his bearing, tall, slender and handsome, with a frank, smiling mouth, a pair of fearless blue eyes, set under a wide and massive forehead, and tawny hair blowing back from his face. Noble, generous and kind hearted, he had an adventurous disposition and a dauntless courage.

He was Guy Tressilian, the only son and heir of Sir Arthur Tressilian, Baronet, of Tressilian Court, England.

His companion presented a remarkable resemblance to him, being also tall and slender and fair, with tawny hair and mustache, but he had not the frank smile, the bright, fearless look, or the joyous spirit that characterized young Tressilian. Younger as he was, he had seen much of the dark side of life, and his experience had been such as to develop in him some of the worst qualities of his nature.

He was Jasper Lowder, Guy Tressilian's hired traveling companion and bosom friend.

The meeting and connection of the two had been a case of chance. Young Tressilian had spent four years in a German university, whence he had been graduated with honor. On leaving the university, in obedience to his father's written command, he had undertaken a tour of the countries including the Mediterranean Sea, in company with one of his late tutors.

This gentleman being unexpectedly promoted to a professorship, abandoned Tressilian at Baden, leaving him to find another travelling companion.

On the evening of the very day after this desertion, as Guy Tressilian was sauntering through the streets of Baden, he had been assailed by a trio of his own countrymen, all more or less intoxicated, it was apparent that they took him for another, and intended to wreak vengeance upon him. Without allowing him to speak, they forced him to defend himself. Guy was getting the worst of the conflict, when a stranger came running to his assistance, and in a few moments the two had put the sailors to flight.

This stranger who came so opportunely to Guy's assistance was Jasper Lowder. His resemblance to young Tressilian awakened in the latter a romantic interest. He questioned Lowder, learned that he was poor and alone in the world, and took him with him to his hotel. Believing that similarity of features indicated a similarity of tastes and nature, he engaged Lowder as his traveling companion, and the past year they had spent together more like brothers than employer and employed.

"This storm is a regular Levanter," said Lowder, clinging with both hands to the bulwarks.

"Do you think the craft will stand it, Tress?"

"Oh, yes," answered young Tressilian, wiping the salt spray from his face. "The Captain knows the Sicilian coast perfectly. In two hours, or less, we shall be in the bay of Palermo. In three hours we shall be domiciled in the best rooms of the hotel Trinacria, with the best supper which Messer Ragusa can furnish. And to-morrow, at noon," he added, "we shall embark for Marseilles in a Messageries steamer."

"And from Marseilles we will proceed to England and to Tressilian Court," said Lowder, with some bitterness. "And I—what is to become of me? I have had a year of unalloyed happiness, and now comes back the drudgery, the hopeless toil, the anxieties of the wretched old lady. You picked me up at Baden, a poor adventurer seeking to gain a living by teaching English, and the same destiny is open to me now."

Tressilian turned his handsome face upon his companion in surprise and affectionate reproach.

"Jasper!" he exclaimed, "you talk strangely. Do you suppose I have called you my friend and brother so long, and loved you so well, to lose you now? I meant to have written to my father concerning you and your future, Jasper, but his sudden recall, received yesterday, causes me to return home without writing. I shall telegraph from Marseilles that you will come home with me. And you will, will you not? You will not abandon me, my friend. I will charge myself with your future. I will see that you obtain the position to which your talents entitle you. You have no ties to keep you on the Continent?"

A strange expression passed over Jasper Lowder's face.

"No, I have no ties," he said huskily. "And you will go home with me?"

"What will your father say to my coming?" demanded Lowder. "He will think your generosity Quixotic. He will

dismiss from his house the hired companion who dares to resemble his son—"

"A sudden lurch of the little vessel, a wave sweeping over the deck, interrupted the sentence.

"You wrong my father," said Tressilian, his blue eyes kindling, when the vessel heaved in the right. "He is the noblest man in the world. He will welcome my friends as his own. You will love him, Jasper, as I do when you know him."

"He doesn't seem very affectionate," remarked Lowder. "You have been away from your home for five years, and he has but just recalled you?"

Young Tressilian's cheeks flushed, as Lowder saw in the lurid glow that momentarily lighted up the tempestuous scene.

"You know, or can guess, the reason, Jasper," he said, with something of an effort. "My father has a ward, the daughter of an old friend—Ah! hear that wind shriek! The gale is increasing!"

"Yes," assented Lowder. "And the ward is Miss Irby—the golden-haired, blonde with whom you have exchanged letters?"

"Yes," said Tressilian. "My father formed a project to have me marry Miss Irby. He did not wish us to grow up together, lest we should learn to regard each other as brother and sister. When Miss Irby came to live at the Court my father sent me to Germany. The night before I left home, he called me into his library and told me all his hopes and plans for my future, and entreated me to continue worthy of his innocent ward, and to keep my heart pure for her. I have done so, Jasper. I have never yet loved any woman. And yesterday I received my father's summons to come home. He has recalled me after five years of absence. I know the wish that lies nearest his heart. I shrink from the proposed marriage. I dread going home. And I dread offending my dear father, whom I love better than any woman. It is hard, Jasper, to revolt against the hopes and plans of a kind and generous father, whose every love for me causes him to urge on this marriage."

"Is it?" said Lowder dryly, and with a strange smile full of sneering bitterness. "My experience has been widely different from yours, Tressilian. Did I ever tell you of my father?"

"No, I took it for granted that he is dead."

"Perhaps he is. I don't know," said Lowder.

With a reckless laugh, "But if he is living, he is a scoundrel. Don't start, Tressilian, at my unflattering speech. Tell me your story. I am in a desperate mood to-night. This storm starts up the bad within me. As the two stood out on the deck, the wind howled, and the spray dashed over their faces violently.

Tressilian's heart warmed to him. "My poor friend," he said. "Must I say again I am not friendly while I live. My father has influenced enough to force you to govern your tongue. This tongue is my own, and I will use it as I please. But if it is not, you are repulsive enough to make your own happiness."

He gasped Lowder's hand, and looked with warm bright eyes, full of sympathy, into Lowder's lowering face.

There had been a temporary lull in the storm. But as the two stood there, the tempest revived and swept over the wild sea in maddened rage.

There was no time for talking now. The waves rose big, just as the vessel would have been before had been but play to this awful outbreak. The vessel creaked on, creaking and groaning, a mere corkie shell on the billows.

"Jasper!" cried the captain, "it's all up with us, signore. I can't make out the Cape in this darkness. We shall go on the rocks. St. Anthony save us!"

The seamen echoed his cries.

The two young Englishmen, comprehending their peril, clasped hands in silence.

For the next few minutes it seemed that a Pandemonium reigned.

Then a noise like the report of a cannon suddenly boomed through the storm and the darkness. The little vessel shivered, staggered, and careened upon her side.

She had struck upon a rock.

A moment later crew and passengers were struggling in the waters.

A few moments of buffeting and tossing, of vain struggles and agonized, involuntary prayer, and then Jasper Lowder felt his senses slip from him, and became unconscious.

When he came to himself, he was lying upon a rocky beach of the Sicilian shore, sore, bruised, and weak as a child.

He opened his eyes. The wind had spent its fury, and now moaned along the coast with a desolate, despairing wail. The waves beat against the rocks.

Lowder struggled to his elbow.

"Wrecked!" he muttered. "I am cast ashore, while the others are drowned! Oh, this is terrible! I have lost my best friend to-night!"

He moaned and wrung his hands.

"He is dead, who would have done so much for me, and I so worthless an agent! All my hopes of an easy and luxurious life must be resigned now!"

At that moment he beheld a dark object at a little distance in the water. The waves hurried this object against the projecting head of a sunken rock. At the same instant Lowder recognized it as the body of a man.

He crept toward it, and the waters dashed the body on the shore at his feet. He put his hands on the face. How cold and wet it was! It felt like the face of a dead man! Lowder's fingers came in contact with the soft, silken mustache, and he knew that the body was that of Guy Tressilian.

Of the five who had stood on the sloop's deck a half-hour earlier, those two alone were left. The Captain and his crew had found their deaths amid the cruel yawning waters.

Lowder thrust his hand under the waistcoat of his friend, but he could not perceive the beating of his heart. Despair took possession of him.

"Dead!" he said. "Dead! And he would have done so much for me! He had lived! And his father and the young girl he was to have married will wait in vain for his coming! His place at Tressilian Court is empty. What a fill!"

It seemed to him that some demon at his side asked the question: Who could fill the place left vacant by noble Guy Tressilian?

A thought came to him—a thought so strange and sinister that he shivered involuntarily. Again he felt of Tressilian's head. He passed his hand over Tressilian's head and felt a gap in the hair.

Putting his hand in his breast-pocket, Lowder drew out his little water-proof watch. He opened it with trembling fingers and struck a light. The red flicker danced a few moments, and then it was gone. How ghastly and dead it looked! The eyes were closed, the smile was gone. The

fruits of years of saving, as dying at that time. My father had deliberately abandoned me. I did not know where to seek him. I had wished to. I took my money and came abroad. I had been on the Continent two years, and had more than my little fortune when I met you. The rest you know."

"An odd, romantic story! But why did you father abandon you?"

"That he might be freed of encumbrances to make a good marriage. Even when my grandmother said so different things, I conclude that my father was in love with a titled lady before my mother's death. No doubt he married this lady. If he lives this lady's son may be his acknowledged heir. My father has utterly disowned the son of his first lady, ill-starred marriage. I have fancy that I shall meet him some day. And Jasper's brow darkened to deeper blackness.

"However, I stand no chance of ever receiving justice at his hands."

"What is your father's name, Jasper?" asked Tressilian. Lowder's face darkened. He bit his lips savagely.

"What I have told you about myself I learned from my own observation, and from chance words of my parents and grandmother. My mother's maiden name was a Jeanette Lowder. At our London lodgings, my father bore the name of Lowder. I don't know his real name, but I should know his face anywhere, although I have not seen him in thirteen years. My mother was really married, Tressilian, but I never heard my father's name. The clergyman who married mother was dead; the witnesses also. When my grandmother was dying she tried to tell me the story. She had put it off too long. All that I could understand of her mumblings was the name of Devereux. I shall never forget that name—Devereux! Probably that was my father's name—my own rightful name. But as I should never find him I sought him, and as he would refuse me if I did find him, I stand no chance of inheriting his property. He may be dead. He may have other sons who have succeeded him. It is all a mystery, but the prominent fact is that I am an outcast, poor, disgraced and friendless."

He leaned over the bulwark, the spray dashing over his face violently.

Tressilian's heart warmed to him. "My poor friend," he said. "Must I say again I am not friendly while I live. My father has influenced enough to force you to govern your tongue. This tongue is my own, and I will use it as I please. But if it is not, you are repulsive enough to make your own happiness."

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seal of death seemed set on the noble features.

Lowder examined the wound. It had been made by contact with the sharp rock, and Lowder perceived its terrible character.

"If he is not dead, he will soon be," he muttered. "His brain has received an awful injury. He won't live till morning, and he is perhaps dead already. He must be dead."

Again it seemed to him as though some demon echoed his words.

The match dropped from his fingers into the water. For a little while he crouched on the wet stones in silence, battling it may be with the better and nobler instincts of his nature, but the better and nobler instincts of his nature.

At last, with sudden and abrupt stealthiness, his hands stole into the breast-pocket of Tressilian and drew out his private note-book, a pen, and a few trinkets. He seemed these among his own garments. Their possession seemed to give him courage, and his face hardened as he spelled beside the body of his friend and piled his garments of all they contained, bestowing his plunder on his own person.

Then he took his own purse, his note-book, a few receipts and raffles from his own pockets and put them in the pockets of Tressilian.

"Oh, done!" he whispered to himself, looking with wild defiant eyes through the darkness. "No one is harmed. He is dead. If he had lived, the world would have provided for me. As he is dying or dead, I must provide for myself. The likeness between us will make my fortune. His friends will be spared a terrible grief, and I shall live at last! Fortune gives me a chance to gain name and wealth at one lucky stroke!"

As if to give himself no chance for repentance, he arose to his feet and turned his searching glances in an inland direction. A light from a cottage window, glimmering faintly through the thick haze, caught his gaze.

Raising his voice, he called loudly: "Help! Help! Help!"

The wind had abated, and his cries rang out through the night with startling distinctness. The light had been moved and disappeared. A minute later, answering cries reached Lowder's ears, and he heard hasty steps and saw the approaching light of a lantern, borne aloft by a man in a dark coat.

"This way!" shouted Lowder. "We are wrecked on the rocks! For the love of Heaven, hasten!"

The bearer of the lantern, attended by a male companion, came running to him, and was soon at his side. The lantern bearer was a rough Sicilian fisherman, a grade above his class. His companion was also Sicilian, but evidently of somewhat higher degree. Both were full of excitement and sympathy.

In a few words as possible, Lowder told the story of the shipwreck, and called attention to the condition of his noble young companion.

"I think he is dead!" he said, in a choking voice. "Carry him up to your cabin. Let everything be done that can be done to save him. I will pay you well for any kindness to him. Poor fellow! He was my traveling companion. I loved him as if he had been my brother instead of only my hired attendant. Poor Jasper!"

The two Sicilians lifted the helpless form of poor young Tressilian, and carried it between them toward their cottage. Jasper Lowder followed them, bewailing his loss. The above we publish as a specimen chapter; but the continuation of this story will be found only in the N. Y. Ledger. Ask for the number dated January 1st, which can be had at any news office or bookstore. If you are not within reach of a news office, you can have the Ledger mailed to you for one year by sending three dollars to Robert Bonner, publisher, 180 William street, N. Y. The Ledger pays more for original contributions than any other periodical in the world. It will publish none but the very best. Its moral tone is the purest, and its circulation the largest. Everybody who takes it is happier for having it.

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